

## METHODISTS MEET IN OKLAHOMA CITY

## Westerners Will Be Hosts to Great General Conference

## PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED

Questions of Unusual Interest to  
Denomination Now Being

**BY MAMIE BAYS.**  
Many religious meetings will be held in different sections of the South and

The Southwest during the year 1914, and around a number of these meetings interest that is more than usual centres. Several of these meetings will be the representative gatherings of large denominations of the South. All of these are of equal interest to the membership of the denominations they represent, and the one about which the greatest interest is probable is the general conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, which will convene at Oklahoma City on Wednesday, May 6, and will be in session about three

weeks. The cause of the increase of general interest attached to the general conference is in comparison with that of the other large religious bodies which will be held about the same time, is the fact that the general conference meets only once in four years, whereas the others, at least most of them, meet annually.

This will be the first time that the general conference has been held at Oklahoma City, and it has not been held west of the Mississippi river since 1912, when it met at Dallas, Tex.

**How It Is Made Up.**

The general conference is composed of an equal number of clerical and lay delegates. The basis of representation is one clerical delegate for every eight members of the annual conference, and one lay delegate for every eight members of the annual conference. The basis of repre-

sentation in the general conference is the same in the annual conference on the foreign mission fields of the church as in the conference in the home territory. One local preacher may be included in the number of lay delegates elected in any annual conference. All of the annual conferences of the church will be represented by members of each of these bodies in the ensuing general conference with

possible exception of the African Mission Conference, which was yet in its formative period. The representation of that body will be made probably by Bishop Walter R. Lambeth, who has the special oversight of the mission work of the church in Africa, and who has made two visits to that field since the meeting of the general conference of 1910, at Asheville, N. C. The other general mission conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, are the Brazil mission, China mission, Cuban mission, Japan mission, Korean mission, and Latin American

Three other conferences are composed largely of foreigners—Mexican border mission, Northwest Mexican mission and the German mission, but most of the territory of these conferences is in the United States.

All of the annual conferences, except five, have been held for the year preceding the meeting of the general conference, and the remaining five will be held during the month.

January, February and March, the last one to be held being the Baltimore Conference, which will convene at Baltimore on March 26. There are fifty-one annual conferences in the church and the total number of delegates elected to represent the conferences already held is 316; of this number 158 are clerical and 158 are lay delegates. When all of the conferences have been held the membership of the general conference will have been increased to about 175 clerical and 175 lay delegates, making a total of 350. Of the 350, 100 are officers of the church.

conference, even if they have not been elected members of the body by the annual conference.

annual conferences of which they are members, and the same is true of the members of the various boards of the church, but only those who are elected delegates will have the privilege of voting on the questions to come before the general conference for action. Many other preachers and laymen of the church will attend the general conference as visitors, hence the total number of those present will be great.

Many other preachers and laymen of the church will attend the general conference as visitors, hence the total number of those present will be much

larger than that indicated by the number of delegates elected.

**Questions of Special Interest.**

Aside from the regular business of the general conference to be transacted during this session, many questions of special interest will be presented in the form of memorials from the annual conferences, which will be discussed.

the committee on memorials referred to for consideration and action, and which will then be acted upon by the general conference as a whole. Among the memorials which are most prominently before the church at this time are those regarding the limitation of the time of consecutive service and the powers of the preachers appointed presiding elders. In the annual conferences, the granting of the rights of the laity to the women of the church, the prohibition of the use of

for admission into the conference, the revision of the language of the Apostle's Creed, so that the words "the Church of God" will take the place of "the holy Catholic Church," and the revision of certain paragraphs in the Book of Discipline of the church. It is probable that the discussion of the memorials touching the presiding eldership will precipitate one of the great-

est rights" of words that will take place on the floor of the general conference during this session. Among the strongest memorials sent to the general convention on this subject are those of the Virginia Conference, one of which recommends that no preacher shall be appointed presiding elder for a longer period than four years, consecutively.

Except by consent of the conference of which he is a member, and the other recommends that in the making of the appointments the preachers and charges, so far as possible, shall be consulted, instead of letting this matter entirely in the hands of the presiding bishop and the presiding elders, as is the case at present. The growth of the democratic spirit in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, is named as the basis of argument in favor of the adoption of more democratic meth-

ods in the making of the appointments in the conferences, and it is not unlikely that this same argument in favor of more democratic methods will be fully presented on the floor of the general conference by representatives of a number of the numerous churches. The statement is heard often that while the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, is regarded one of the most democratic churches in spirit, in one feature of its polity, at least, it gives an exhibition of the most autocratic power

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...for the past four years has re-  
sulted in the conference over-  
sight. He is presiding until the entire  
conference, the appointing power still  
in the hands of the bishop. As a result  
the bishops confer freely with and  
make suggestions from the presiding  
bishop in the matter of the

**Argument for Change.**—The argument in favor of the limitation of the term of the preachers is based largely upon the fact that the routine work of the preachers is of a temporary nature. In succession, units a preacher a work of the regular pastorate. The appointment as presiding

is involved in a suit brought in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia at Alexandria, by Oliver Durant, a man of wealth and prominence. Mr. Durant has asked the court permanently to enjoin the county authorities from collecting from him about \$85,000 in State and

ence. No bishop was the active member of the conference, and the quinquennial, and the opinion to prevail that no bishops will be elected at the session of the general conference. The number of bishops now active, and there thirteen of these, should take the permanent relation, and this is not the case. The conference of 1880, effort was made to get some

of special interest will be that following the change in the name of the church from Methodist Episcopal to Methodist, the annual conference of America. Before the conference convenes, the vote on the question will have been taken by the members of the church, and down to the general conference, the vote has been taken by forty-three

gent name of the church, it is a matter of fact that many of those who have voted against the change are in favor of changing the name of the church to the Methodist church, and a number of the change have been in favor of the change. This building will be used for the conference.

**Gift Will Be Declined.**

The board of the church, advised by the general conference,

of the interesting facts regarding the nominations from the annual conference is that of the 158 delegates elected, only sixty-one were members of the general conference of 1910 among the 158 of the 158 lay delegates elected members of that body. This fact

of many of the delegates from a percent of the conferences during the past several general conferences of the same, whereas, in the general conference of 1914, the majority of the delegates will be men have never before represented conferences in the highest court of the church.

